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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO  
AGDA (M) (14 Nov 69) FOR OT UT 693326

19 November 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 815th Engineer Battalion, Period Ending 31 July 1969

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1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 4b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT UT, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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as

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 815TH ENGINEER BATTALION (CONSTRUCTION)  
APO San Francisco 96318

EGCE-OP

31 July 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction)  
for the Period Ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR - (65) (R1)

THRU: Commanding Officer  
937th Engineer Group (Combat)  
APO 96318

Commanding General  
18th Engineer Brigade  
ATTN: AVBD-C  
APO 96377

Commanding General  
United States Army, Vietnam  
ATTN: AVHGC-DST

Commander in Chief  
United States Army, Pacific  
ATTN: GPOP-DT

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development  
Department of the Army (ACSFOR -DA)  
Washington, D.C. 20310

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AGCA-OF

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction)  
for the Period Ending 31 July 1969, RUS CSFOR - (65) (RI)

Section I. Operations: Significant Activities

1. During this report period emphasis was placed on the completion of numerous projects. A new pool liner was installed at the Engineer Hill Swimming Pool and facilities necessary for operation were completed ensuring full use during the coming hot season. The 604th Aircraft Maintenance Hangar was finished and turned over to the user with minor deficiencies. This terminated a years construction effort on the largest facility located in the Fleiku area. Upon receipt of electrical supplies the 88th S'S Installation Storage Warehouse was complete and turned over to the user. The placement of 4 culverts and headwalls at Christmas Tree Heliport marked completion of the roads and hardstands project at that facility. At Marshalling road three culverts were extended, new headwalls were constructed and asphalt was blade laid over 50,000 square feet of surface to complete the vehicle assembly area. At the AUTOSWCCO Facility, a 72 square foot pad extension was made and an air conditioner installed.

2. Numerous other projects are still under construction. At Camp Holloway two of nine BO's have been completed and are now occupied. The remaining seven are nearing completion. Under construction at Camp Schmidt are four (4) maintenance buildings totaling thirteen (13) bays. Three (3) M billets and one (1) orderly room/supply room are under construction at Engineer Hill. In addition a total of 106 acres of land have been grass seeded and fertilized in Fleiku Area Cantonments. At the 815th Battalions CIA Yard tactical security is being upgraded with the addition of a new guard tower and bunker. Upgrade of the perimeter lighting and security fencing is also underway. The construction effort at Log Depot on a 40 X 100 Maintenance Storage Building has been stalled due to a lack of necessary construction materials. The battalion has drilled three water wells. Two of those are now operational at Cheo Reo. The third was stopped at Dak To because of subterranean rock obstructions. During the previous report period construction began on a crusher and quarry site at TOF-7P. Progress during this report period included the completion of fourteen living/fighting bunkers, a messhall, an orderly room/supply room, a latrine and shower, and a maintenance building. Additional cantonment facilities are under construction. Assembly of the crusher unit has also begun. Tactical security has received prime emphasis with the aim of making this perimeter one of the finest in this theater of operations. At Webb Quarry upgrade of the operations area was initiated. Drainage is being installed and asphalt laid over main working areas. Knee braces were erected to support the bulkhead.

3. During this report period lines of communication emphasis was placed on paving QL-14A between Fleiku and Dak To, maintaining QL-14S between Dragon Mountain and Pan Elec, and completing the Fleiku By Pass. On QL-14A, roadway and shoulder upgrade preceded the paving of 21.3 KM of MACV standard roadway. Maintenance on QL-14S consisted of establishing drainage and rebuilding the road surface along 24 KM of roadway. The 12.7 KM Fleiku Bypass was completed during this report period by blade laying 5.8 KM of

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction)  
for the Period Ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR - (65) (RI)

asphalt. To accomplish these projects, 48,450 CY of rock was crushed at Webb Quarry and 29,300 tons of asphalt was produced by Montum and Pleiku Asphalt Plants. At the close of this report period both asphalt plants and paving trains were placed on maintenance standown for cleaning, rebuilding, and general overhauling. This is being performed at an opportune time when weather conditions hamper paving operations.

4. Inclosure 1 gives a list of all units assigned, attached and under operational control of this unit during the report period. During the reporting period the 815th Engineer Battalion and its attached units were engaged in 15 days of training, 7 days of troop movements and 80 days of normal operations. There were no major difficulties encountered in any of the tactical troop movements.

5. Numerous pieces of MCA equipment have arrived during this period. The equipment has proven its capabilities and can increase the production of LOC construction. Unfortunately, however, certain problems are worthy of note:

a. Parts: No initial FIL arrived with the equipment. This has proven to be the greatest single factor involved in the long down time reported for certain items. A FIL is greatly needed.

b. Training: By regulation only certain individuals are authorized to test and license personnel on MCA equipment. Often these people are not available for extended periods of time. This has resulted in having various pieces of equipment on hand for long periods of time with no drivers. This could be eliminated through a revision of the test procedures.

c. Personnel: For a short period of time this unit had four MCA mechanics, one supply specialist, and a foreman to maintain the equipment. Shortly this unit will begin operation of a new quarry approximately 45 K south of Pleiku. This means a split of the MCA personnel in order to maintain both areas. A maximum of eight people will be at each site to maintain and service seventy-seven (77) items of equipment.

6. The class IV yard of the 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction) has suffered in the receiving of critical items of supply during this reporting period. The shortages of lumber in country, coupled with the command control of these items has depleted the 815th's stock of 1" and 2" material. This has forced this unit to use substitutes and in most cases to use larger material. Shortages also exist in corrugated metal roofing and cement. Although this unit has on order over 25,000 sheets of roofing and 15,000 bags of cement, no sizeable shipment of either has occurred during this reporting period. Other battalions and separate units received very little support if any this period, due to our shortages.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction)  
for the Period Ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR - (65) (R1)

2. Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations, and Recommendations.

A. Personnel

(1) Information for Relatives of Servicemen.

(a) Observation: Relatives of soldiers serving in Vietnam should be made aware of the various agencies they can contact for assistance.

(b) Evaluation: A letter sent by the Battalion Commander to the next of kin for every enlisted man E-5 and below who enters the command alleviates many congressional letters of interest. A mother or wife can then write the commander or an appropriate agency to get the answers to various questions which might have been asked of congressmen.

(c) Recommendation: That the battalion commanders of other units send letters to relatives and include with them a list of those personnel they should contact for assistance in various areas and a map of Vietnam indicating where their son is working within the country.

B. Operations:

(1) Failure of Headwalls at Webb Quarry

(a) Observation: The top of the headwall has moved forward several inches and the supporting piles have begun to bend. Also a crack approximately one foot deep has developed across the top of the earth fill, parallel to, and approximately fifteen feet behind the headwall. All of this has occurred since the rains began.

(b) Evaluation: The obvious solution to this problem would be to design and construct the headwall to prevent failure of this type.

(c) Recommendations: After construction of the Headwall it should be backfilled in compacted lifts. Adequate drainage areas should be provided and paved, where necessary, with asphaltic cement to prevent seepage of water. This headwall was repaired by constructing drainage, paving the fill behind the wall and installing knee braces on the vertical poles. This should prevent further movement of the wall.

(2) Corrective actions for clogged culverts:

(a) Observation: Culverts were being clogged with silt during the heavy rain periods.

(b) Evaluation: The present culverts were adequate to handle the drainage problem, but were quickly restricted by the silt.

(c) Recommendation: To keep culverts from being clogged due to silt, a retaining wall should be placed in the ditch on the upstream side a few feet from the mouth of the culvert. This can easily be constructed

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from 2" X 6" material supported by U-shaped pickets.

(3) Drop Inlet Culverts

(a) Observation: A drop inlet was essential for proper drainage. However shortages in critical forming materials and cement precluded conventional construction.

(b) Evaluation: The supply system had made available prefabricated steel culvert sections in a range of cross sectional dimensions.

(c) Recommendations: A drop inlet drain was constructed by standing an assembled section of culvert on end. A second section was then welded at right angles to the first as shown in Figure (Incl 2). The top of the drain was then placed in concrete apron and covered by a rebar grill.

(4) Production of Construction Materials:

(a) Observation: The shortage of critical construction materials greatly hampered the progress of all verticle construction projects.

(b) Evaluation: With the prominent need and high priority of MER facilities (latrines and showers) an additional effort was required to overcome the materials handicap. The local national employees were now in excess and cement was yet available.

(c) Recommendation: The Vietnamese were utilized to construct cement block forms. Soon a new stockpile of construction material was available. The construction of urgently needed latrines and showers then proceeded bringing very satisfactory results. See Inclosure 3.

C. Training: None

D. Intelligence: None

E. Logistics: None

F. Organization: None

G. Other: None

3 Incl  
as

Incls 1 and 3 wd HQ, DA  
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*James C. Donovan*  
JAMES C. DONOVAN  
LTC, CE  
COMMANDING

5 - CO, 937th Engr Gp (C), ATTN: EGC-OP, APO 96318

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EGC-CO(31 July 69) 1st Ind

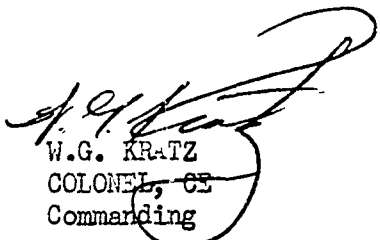
SUBJECT: Operational Support on Lessons Learned for the period 1 May 1969 thru 31 July 1969.

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 937TH ENGINEER GROUP (COMBAT) APO 96318, 23 August 1969.

TO: Commanding General, 18th Engineer Brigade, ATTN: AVCB-CB, APO 96377.

1. The subject report, submitted by the 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction) has been reviewed and is considered a well compiled report of organization activities.

2. I concur with the observation and recommendations of the Battalion Commander.

  
W.G. KRATZ  
COLONEL, CE  
Commanding



AVBC-CG (31 Jul 69) 2nd Ind.

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 815th Engineer Battalion (Const) for  
the Period Ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 18TH ENGINEER BRIGADE, APO 96377 1 SEP 1969

TO: Commanding General, U.S. Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST, APO 96375

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the 815th Engineer Battalion (Const), as indorsed by the 937th Engineer Group (Combat). The report is considered to be an excellent account of the Battalion's activities during the reporting period.

2. This headquarters concurs with the observations and recommendations of the Battalion and Group Commanders, with the following comments added:

The proposal of Section 2, Part A, is presently being studied for possible implementation throughout the 18th Engineer Brigade.

*J. W. Morris*  
J. W. MORRIS  
BG, USA  
Commanding

CF:

- 1 - CO, 937th Engr Gp
- 1 - CO, 815th Engr Bn

AVHGC-DST (31 Jul 69) 3d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction) for  
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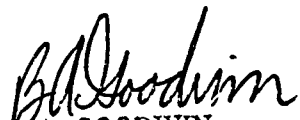
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 11 OCT 1969

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DI,  
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 31 July 1969 from Headquarters, 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction).

2. Reference item concerning "Information for Relatives of Servicemen", section II, page 4, paragraph 2A(1); nonconcur. By keeping the soldier informed through the various information programs available to the commander and by encouraging him to write home frequently, the same results can be achieved. To direct battalion commanders to write to the next of kin of all enlisted men, grade E-5 and below, would place an excessive administrative burden on the commander.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
E. A. GOODWIN  
MAJ, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

Cy furn:  
815th Engr Bn  
18th Engr Bde

GPOP-DT (31 Jul 69) 4th Ind


SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 815th Engineer Battalion (Construction)  
for Period Ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 21 OCT 69

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the Army,  
Washington, D. C. 20310

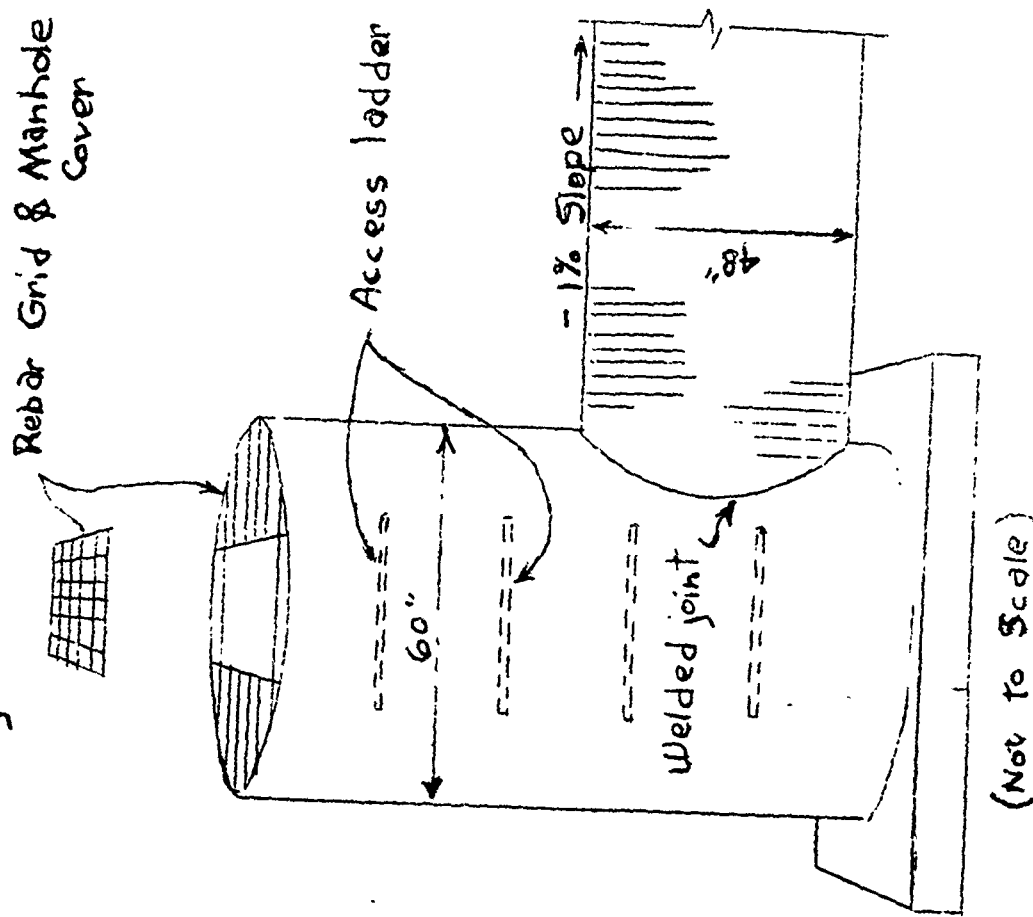
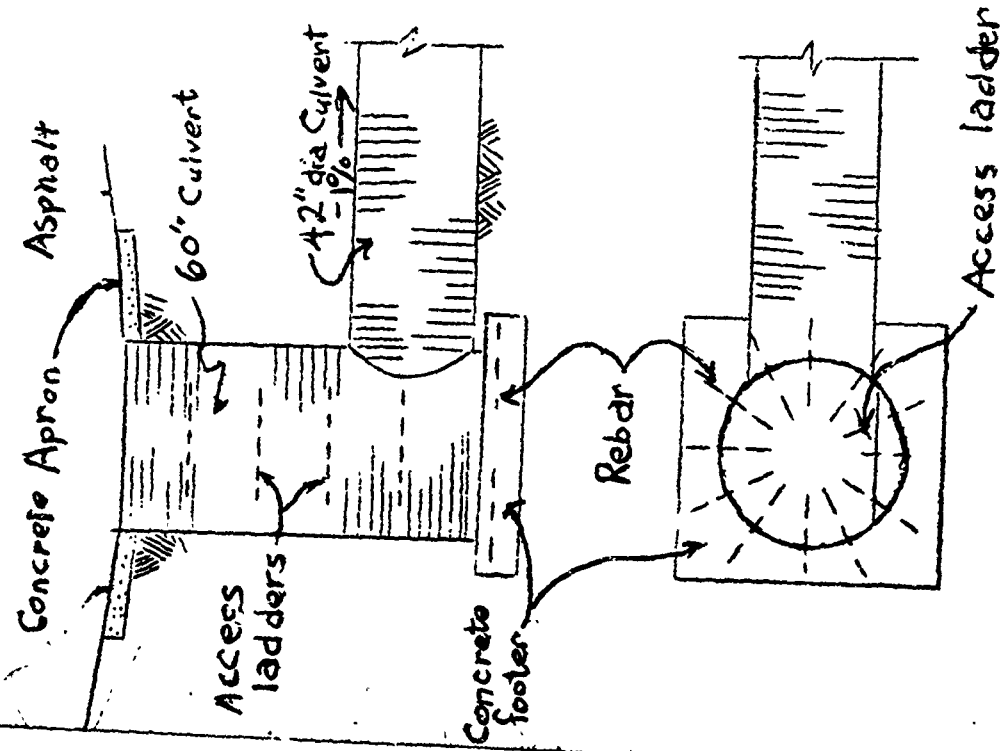
This headquarters concurs in subject report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



D. A. TUCKER  
CPT. AGC  
ASST AG

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